Comparison of the Nature and Strategic features of Facilities Management and Other Building Support Practices in Lagos

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Abstract

This study examined the features of the Lagos-Nigerian Facilities Management (FM) practice and how strategic and value adding it is. This was achieved by comparing its principles, work focus and object amongst others, with that of four other traditional Building Support Service (BSS) practices. The research design was survey, carried out through self-administered questionnaires directed to a sample of 123 BSS providers that work with office buildings in Lagos metropolis. The data were analyzed using frequency counts, means, Chi square test and Wilcoxon sign rank test. The study revealed that the FM title is largely used only as a "catch phrase" by BSS providers, to enhance patronage. It further reveals that BSS providers that are addressed as facilities managers do not adopt FM principles in their practices. Also that the principles of property management was used predominantly amongst the respondents, while the main work focus of the maintenance manager was rated "most important". These findings imply that there is insufficient knowledge of the strategic roles of FM among BSS practitioners and that they are still largely confused about its distinctive features and value adding benefit. This highlights the need for further education on the practice of FM and greater commitment to ensuring that it plays its distinctive strategic roles. Therefore, this paper recommends that relevant professional bodies and FM training institutions must provide training and re-training opportunities nationally and internationally, in order to enhance the knowledge base of the practice, particularly its strategic content. Furthermore, the FM training curriculum should incorporate more contextual issues. This will demonstrate that the difference between FM and other BSS practices is beyond nomenclature.

Keywords:
Building support services practices, Facilities management, Lagos-Nigeria, Strategic features of facilities management.

INTRODUCTION

Facilities management (FM) is responsible for planning, designing and management of buildings as well as their systems, equipment and furniture in order to enhance an organization's ability to compete successfully (Becker, 1990). The FM unit in any establishment or organisation has the responsibility of providing best value for facilities and building services (Williams, 2003). It is about taking control, adding value, supporting the business and ensuring that the space and working environment enhance and not impede productivity of the staff and the core activity (Wiggins, 2010). In summary, FM has two complimentary objectives: that of reducing the risks and constraints that properties impose on organizations and their workers and that of promoting the benefits that the property might provide.

Although FM evolved from traditional building support service (BSS) practices it is strategically different in that it is proactive and integrates people, place, process and technology to ensure functionality of the built environment (International Facilities Management Association, 2006). Furthermore, it is an umbrella practice that incorporates aspects of other BSS disciplines, such as maintenance management, corporate real estate management, property management and asset management among others.

The current global economic downturn has had an overwhelming negative effect on various sectors of national economies worldwide. In view of its recognized advantages, application of FM principles in the provision of building support service has been identified as a major way of improving value and financial performance, creating a competitive edge and improving the prospects of sustainability of businesses (Oselland & Bertlett, 1999; Amaratunga, Baldry & Sarshar, 2000; Bottom, 2003; Lindholm & Nenonen, 2006 & Pickard, 2006). However, these identified advantages can only be achieved within economies with a vibrant, proactive and value adding FM practice.

Researches on the value adding features of FM in different contexts indicate that in spite of its relative growth in the developed world some practices are yet to feature distinctive value adding content, especially in parts of Europe where FM is yet to acquire strategic dimensions. For example in Denmark, few practitioners provide business and organization specific services (Jensen, 2010), in Germany professional facilities management has found limited application, (Kanning, Vogler, Bernold, Gellenbeck & Schlockermann, 2008), while in the UK market it is found that some of the FM practices are still focused only on cost and generally operational (Kaya, Heywood, Arge, Brawn & Alexander, 2004). Tuomela and Puhto (2001) observed that in Sweden, facilities managers are hardly different from traditional building support service providers (BSS) such as property and maintenance managers, while, Gilleard and Yiqun (1999) observed that in Shanghai, the distinctions between FM and other traditional building support services are not yet clear. In contrast, the FM service has had significant contribution to the prosperity of economies with already well developed practices, such as

Japan, United States of America (USA), The Netherlands, Australia and to some extent the UK (Alexander, 2003; Drion, Mellisen & Wood, 2010). These findings support the assertion that the ability of FM to achieve major gains varies with the socio-economic context of its application and its maturity levels (Wong, 2000 & Chitopanich, 2004). Hence, the differences in the strategic and value adding content of FM practices in various markets globally have created the need for studies which examine practices in different contexts; a gap which some of the studies earlier referenced attempted to address.

In Nigeria, it appears there is a dearth of research on this subject. The few empirical studies that have been conducted on FM, focused on the application of some FM concepts such as lifecycle costing (Adejumo, Adewunmi & Omirin, 2009) and benchmarking (Adewunmi, Omirin & Koleoso, 2015). Other studies on FM practice in Nigeria had limited focus, which did not include examining the features and strategic content of FM, particularly in comparison with other BSS practices. For example Oladokun (2011) examined the technical ability and competence of FM practitioners, Abigo, Madgwick, Gidado and Okonji (2012) examined sustainable FM practice while Koleoso, Omirin, Adewunmi and Babawale (2013) examined applicability of performance measurement tools to Nigerian FM practice.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Nigerian FM practice is in its infancy as esserted by Akintunde (2009) cited in Adewunmi, Omirin and Koleoso (2015). It also appears to suffer from identity crises in that most BSS providers view and address themselves as Facilities Managers, irrespective of whether or not they adopt FM principles or provide any strategic content. It behooves researchers to empirically determine the actual situation. This identified gap makes this research more pertinent as it attempts to provide information on whether the Lagos FM practice offers distinctive value adding effects as expected, particularly in comparison to other BSS practices. This is more so in the light of the crises prone nature of the Nigerian context.

In view of the foregoing, the intention of this paper is twofold. The first is to examine the characteristics of the BSS practitioners in Lagos market and evaluate their practices. Secondly the paper attempts to determine the extent to which the professionals understand the applicable principles of their practice and perform their identified roles. In other words it determines the strategic content of FM practices in comparison to other BSS practices.

It is hoped that the knowledge on the context of the Nigerian FM practice that this study provides, would aid international comparison while also identifying areas for improvements both in training and practice for local and international practitioners of FM.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Differences between FM and Other Traditional Building Support Service Principles

The focus of work of any particular

practice can be seen as the center or outline of their activities as practitioners. It is the major concentration of their work or the main activities that provide direction for their work. The object of work on the other hand are physical or mental thing(s) towards which the actions or services of the practice is directed.

Facilities management is concerned about the property end-users' service support needs (Noor, Nazali and Pitt, 2010). According to Wiggins (2010), facilities manager are champions of the end users' needs. These characteristics of FM make its principles of practice, work focus and objects of interests different from that of the traditional professions from which it evolved. This necessitates examining literature on the delineations of some of the more popular BSS practices in greater details, in order to underscore these differences and to identify appropriate variables to use in examining differences in the BSS practices in this study. It is recognized that because these definitions are contingent on the local culture, people's personal and organizational interests (Tuomela and Puhto, 2001), they vary minutely in different literature. Nevertheless some issues which are highlighted in the following review are commonly featured by authors.

In the Real Property Asset Management practice, real property is the main product and asset of the organization. The practice therefore involves buying, selling and management of real estate portfolio entities. It deals with issues such as why, where and when to sell, buy and develop buildings, what groups of real estates to invest in and how best to finance these transactions in order to achieve the financial goals set by the owner (Galaty, 2006). Real estate profits are created in three different ways: buying properties, operating a property to maximize annual income and selling at the right time to maximize capital return (Kateley & Lachman, 1986 cited in Tuomela & Puhto, 2001).

In real estate asset management focus is on property and facilities as business capital. Real estate is traded in the same way that stocks are traded but both within the property and capital market. Therefore, real estate investment which is also the capital of the business is the focus of work for the organization and its main assets. It is therefore the object of concern for the real estate asset manager.

Maintenance Management has to do with the operations and maintenance of the physical component of the assets. Common tasks of a maintenance manager include operation and maintenance of plants, equipment and building components, plant shutdown, materials and parts management. It also involves engineering activities such as root cause analysis, condition monitoring, equipment data analysis and site supervision (Noor, Nazali & Pitt, 2010). The maintenance manager concentrates on providing a functional and well-conditioned building and equipment. Repairs and operation of facilities and service equipment, furniture and fittings are his focus, while these elements, the technicians and service persons are the important objects of the practice.

Property management focuses on long term value of real estate investments. It is concerned with maximizing exchange value of

a particular property use (Stansall, 1994). Its focus is on meeting owner's objective of profitability (return) of property as an investment and the preservation of their value. It would also focus on meeting other objectives of the owner which could be social or political. Property asset valuation is therefore a major scope of responsibility. Property management entails overseeing the day to day tasks of an investment building which may include administrative management in forms of rent collections, record keeping, reporting, management in forms of marketing strategy, tenant selection, supervision of repairs rent schedules; and physical management in forms of maintenance, rehabilitation and renovation (Lapides & Frank 1991 cited in Tuomela & Puhto, 2001). Relatedly, for the property manager the objects of focus include Property owner's income, capital return and value of property.

Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) is quite similar to property management and the practitioners usually carry out most of the responsibilities of the property manager. It however involves managing properties for corporations who do not have real estate as their core business but invest in real estate for the main purpose of providing accommodation for their operations (Galaty, 2006). Therefore, the focus of an efficient CREM is to provide an appropriate working environment at the least possible cost (Bon & luck, 2002) while the object of interest in CREM is optimized cost of occupation, facilities and equipment.

Facilities management entails the general function of coordinating the needs of people, equipment, and operational activities into the physical workplace. FM concentrates on users' needs and on making a building the best for the processes of the organisation (Williams, 2003). The facility manager implements company policies on property issues and adopts strategic cost control and service performance level control mechanisms in its operations. Relatedly, the object of interest is building, space and services (Leväinen, 1997). He focuses on the occupants of a workplace and on ensuring that the space and services support the organisation's production activities. A facilities manager plays business support role working closely with policy makers on property decisions. As such, the activities of efficient FM is guided by a facilities policy which is developed after in-depth strategic planning and consultations with due reference to the organization's mission statement (Williams, 2002). Therefore, the facilities manager must determine the needs of the users of his service through due recourse to the strategic needs of these users as indicated in the facilities policy. It adopts proactive rather than reactive practices. In summary, FM is strategic in nature.

In view of the identified differences in the features and principles of these various BSS practices as indicated in the reviewed literature, this study examines the principles of these practices within the Lagos market in order to determine if they observe similar delineations.

Strategic integration in facilities management

Strategy can be defined as long term

lines of action that organisations take to achieve their goals (Wiggins, 2010). For any process to add value to the core business of an organization there needs to be an understanding of the organisational mission. Strategic facilities planning provide techniques that can prepare a business for changes in the general business climate and for internal changes within the organization itself (Pertz, 1995). The strategy phase requires fewer resources but bears the most significant impact on productivity and asset value. The facilities function should have end objectives and goals that are specific to organisations or users.

According to Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (2013), identifying the users' needs in view of the organizational strategy is a major and distinctive role of FM. The facility manager does not only implement company policy on property issues but also recognises that one of his areas of specialization is to advise and work closely with policy makers on property decisions, while also providing for strategic considerations in the future facility and service provision.

This study attempts to determine if facilities managers in the study area adopt the more strategic FM principles as identified in the foregoing literature, in their operations. It also determines whether these practitioners recognise the strategic focus and objects of their practise and distinguish themselves from other BSS practitioners by performing these roles.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted survey design using a relational, cross sectional, style. Self-administered questionnaires containing closed ended questions were administered to a sample of 123 BSS providers working in office buildings within Lagos metropolis. Lagos is the hub of commerce in Nigeria where several organizations and buildings requiring FM are located. Multi-staged sampling was adopted for this study. This involved purposively identifying office buildings in the study area that meet specific criteria and then choosing the respondents for the study randomly from the sampling frame of BSS providers in these buildings. The chosen buildings had to be purpose built, have well-established building service support provisions, should not be undergoing renovation and were not to be in the process of a change; neither should they have undergone a change of their support service providers in the last one year. It was expected that the distinctiveness of this group of buildings would make the characteristics and nature of the FM practice easily discernible. It was also hoped that this approach would generate the sample from a homogeneous population with as little variability as possible (McQueen Knusson, 1999, cited in Adenuga 2008). The population of BSS providers that worked with buildings that met these criteria was 412.

The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula for determining sample sizes for continuous data, as continuous data played primary role in this study. This formula is as stated below;

$n_0 =$

Where n = estimated sample size; t = t value for the selected alpha level; s = standard deviation of the population and d = acceptable margin of error. S is to be calculated by dividing number of points on the scale by number of standard deviations, while d is to be obtained from the acceptable margin of error multiplied by the number of the point on scale used. Therefore for a five point scale as was used in this research d and s are calculated as follows:

d = number on scale * acceptable margin of error (5*0.5) = 0.25; = 1.25.

The alpha level used in this case is 0.05 (95%); the appropriate t value for this is 1.96.This alpha level is acceptable generally for most researches. Lower alpha levels are only required where critical decisions with significant financial implications or those that could bring harm to humans might be based (Bartlett, Kotrlik, & Higgins, 2001), such as in the field of medicine.

Therefore using the above formular, the required sample size (n_0) is;

n_0 = = = 96.04

Therefore: n_0 = 94

Since this sample size exceeds 5% of the population i.e. (421*.05 = 21), Cochran's correction formula was used to calculate the final sample size (Bartlett, *et al*., 2001). These calculations are as follows:

n = = = = 76.5

Therefore the adjusted required sample size is = 77.

To prevent the bias effect of poor response rate, over sampling is usually recommended. Therefore, we decided on the proportion of oversampling to use by using the response rate during the pilot study as a guide (Bartlett *et al*., 2001). This proportion was 62.5% (i.e. 20 responses retrieved from 32). Therefore the sample size for oversampling was calculated from the formular; required sample size/pilot study response rate (Bartlett et al., 2001). Therefore the required sample size = 77/.625 = 123. 2; whereby the required sample size for this study population of 412 was calculated to be 123 respondents. This number was then chosen randomly amongst the population of BSS providers. The table of sampling that was developed by Bartlett, *et al*. (2001) using Cochran's formular indicated sample sizes of 92 and 96 for continuous data with a population size of 400 and 500 respectively, where an alpha value and margin of error of 0.05 and 0.03 respectively were used. This implies that the sample size that was used for this study is adequate.

The survey instrument was validated by eight experts (in practice and academia) and a focus group comprising of PhD students and their supervisors. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, means, Chi square test and Wilcoxon signed rank test. A confidence level of 99% was used. Out of the questionnaires sent out 67 were completed and returned which represents a 55% response rate.

Data on the strategic features of the practice of building support service providers were obtained from questions on the prevalent principle used, work focus and main work object. Almost all respondents adopt the title of a facilities manager, so for the aspects of this study that requires comparison of the practice of the real facility managers with other BSS providers we had to use the distinctive features of the FM practice as indicated in literature and snowballing techniques to separate

respondents into the two categories. Two of the researchers earlier went on a three months doctoral training in UK to enhance their general understanding of FM guiding principles and practice and greatly helped in this identification process.

The data were measured using nominal and interval data. The interval scale was a 5 point Likert scale as follows: "not important" (1), "less important" (2), "somewhat important" (3), "important" (4), and "very important". (5). The data from the nominal scale were analysed using frequency analysis, while for the interval data the mean values of the respondents' ratings were obtained for each variable and thereafter used to rank the items in a descending order.

RESULTS

Characteristics of the BSS Practitioners in the Study

The respondents were mainly senior officers (45.5%), followed by managers (28.8%), while 9.1% are junior officers. About 1.5% are Chief Executive Office's (CEOs). This implies that providers of BSS in the study range from junior officers to CEOs although majority of them are at least senior officers. Most of them (45.7%) are associate members of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), a parallel body of this in the United Kingdom is the General Practitioners under the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The next most popular institutional membership is that of International Facility Management Association, Nigerian chapter (11.5%). A few of the practitioners are members of the Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors (5.7%). Only 2.9% are members of the Nigerian Institute of Architects, while other practitioners in the built environment jointly constituted 34.3% of the total respondents. This result implies that the Lagos BSS practice is dominated by members of NIESV and IFMA. This is consistent with a number of the earlier studies. Most of the respondents have less than ten years work experience (90.8 percent) while only 9.3 percent have more than ten years work experience. This is a reflection of the infancy of the BSS practices and FM.

Characteristics of the BSS Practices in the Study

This section examines various aspects of the characteristics of the BSS practices in the study area.

Prevalent principle used by support service providers in Nigeria

This section identifies the most prevalent BSS practice among professionals who manage office buildings. The major principles for the five different BSS practices that were featured in this study (Table 1) were identified from literature and the key to the interpretation of how the principles relate to the different practices are as follows:

1). PM- Property management (managing property in order to maximize value and rental income for the owner at minimal cost)

2). AM- Asset management (physical management and management of trading on properties which serve as capital, asset or investment to the owner in a way that will maximize profit from them)

3). MM- Maintenance management (Optimising quality of maintenance in a

property at minimal cost)

4). FM- Facilities management (Providing space planning and effective support service to building users/occupants to aid achievement of organizational goal)

5). CREM- Corporate real estate management (Optimising efficiency of corporate real estate/working environment for owner organisations at minimal cost

The respondents were requested to indicate which of the above principles they adopt in providing support service to the particular building under reference, making only one choice. This was done making sure that the particular BSS practice that each principle represent was not disclosed to the respondents. This was in a bid to ensure that respondents truly indicate the principle that they are using rather than indicate the principle that aligns with the practice that they believe they are involved with.

Table 1: *Frequencies and Chi-square test for prevalent principle used by service providers*

	Observed Number	Percentage	Expected Number
Property management	32	51	12.6
Asset management	5	8	12.6
Maintenance management	9	14	12.6
Facilities management	15	24	12.6
Corporate real estate management	2	3	12.6
Total	63	100	63
Chi-square	44.4		
Degree of Freedom	4		
Asymptotic Significant Level	0.0001		

It was found that the prevalent support service principle in Nigeria is property management with a frequency of 32 (51%) followed by facilities management with a frequency of 15 (24%). Support services principles which are less commonly used are maintenance management, asset management and corporate real estate management in that order with frequencies of 9 (14%), 5 (8%) and 2 (3%) respectively (Table 1).

To determine if the observed differences in the frequencies of the adoption of these principles are statistically significant or just a result of random variation, a hypothesis was postulated as follows:

H1: "there is no significant difference in the level of adoption of different BSS principles by the practitioners".

The lower panel of Table 1 shows the chi-square values for test for significant difference. From the test, the P value is found to be less than the significance value ($P = 0.0001 < 0.01$) at a degree of freedom of 4. This implies that the chi-square value, 44.857 obtained was large enough at the 99% significance level, hence the hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that the differences in the level of adoption of the various principles among the different group of practitioners are significant. This establishes the significant position of property management rather than facilities management principle as the most adopted in providing building and facility support services among BSS practitioners. This implies that majority of them are not adopting the FM principle in their practice.

Proportion of support service providers that adopt FM principles amongst those that address themselves as facilities Managers

Anecdotal evidence suggests that BSS providers address themselves indiscriminately as Facilities Managers irrespective of whether or not they adopt FM principles. Also, majority of those that are addressed as Facilities Managers typically do not understand what FM principle entails. Hence this section of the study attempts to determine if this observation can be backed up by empirical data. To achieve this, the study identified the proportion of respondents that regard themselves as Facilities Managers and thereafter compares this proportion with those that adopt recognized FM principle as indicated in Table 1. It was found that almost all the service providers (94%) regard themselves as Facilities Managers, while table 1 shows that only 24% of them adopt FM principle in their practice. These values confirms that majority of the Nigerian service providers who do not apply FM principle in their practice and do not understand the practice of FM adopt the title of facilities managers. This supports the conclusion that the FM title is used largely as a "catch phrase" to enhance patronage, as most clients believe that FM is more contemporary and offers greater opportunity for businesses in comparison to other BSS practices.

Extent to which Facilities Managers carry out their Defined Roles and the Strategic Content of their Practice in Comparison with other BSS Providers

Literature indicates that each of the five practices that were identified from literature and hence used in this study have different work focus and object of work and every practitioner should be able to identify the most important focus and object for his / her practice because, expectedly this should guide the performance of their roles. Therefore, it is important that facilities managers recognize the distinctive focus and object of FM in order to be able to add value to the client's business through their services. This section examines how the practitioners generally perceive and invariably rate the importance of the different work focus and object that were featured. It also determines if the facilities managers in this study recognize the work focus and objects of FM and expectedly rated their importance differently, from other BSS providers.

The questionnaire indicated that the importance attached to each variable by the respondent was to be based on the extent to which they guide the performance of their roles as BSS providers. The results are indicated in tables 2 and 3 for the work focus and object respectively. For the five BSS practices together, seven relevant work focus and six objects respectively were identified from literature. It is important to mention that in the questionnaire the focus and objects that related to the different BSS practices were not indicated to prevent bias in the responses. This is however contained in the key in tables 2 and 3 as guided by literature. The results in the two tables were presented in three parts; altogether for all respondents and then separately for the facilities managers and the non-facilities managers (Other BSS providers).

Comparison of the Important Work Focus of Facilities Managers and Other BSS Providers

According to the scale used, a score of 3 represents somewhat important, 4 is important, while 5 is very important. For the aggregated service providers ratings, the least value indicated for all variables was 3.74 implying that from their perspective, all the areas of work focus are at least "somewhat important" while most are quite important (Table 2).

Table 2: *Main Work Focus of the Nigerian Building Service Support Providers*

Work Focus	All Service provider		Facility Managers		Non-Facility Managers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Maintenance of the facilities, equipment, fixtures and other assets (MM)	4.50	1	4.65	2	4.45	1
Providing comfort and managing buildings for owner organizations at least possible cost (CREM)	4.42	2	4.71	1	4.33	2
Providing adequate work space & support services to enhance organisational performance (FM)	4.32	3	4.59	3	4.22	4
Maintenance of the building fabric and other building asset (MM)	4.17	4	4.38	4	4.10	5
Obtaining optimum capital return and profit from property as investment and core product (AM)	4.08	5	4.27	7	4.33	2
Management of leases, legal acquisition (PM)	3.81	6	3.63	6	3.88	6
Achieving stated objectives of the owners in terms of optimum income return, preservation of value and other such as social or political needs (PM)	3.74	7	3.71	5	3.76	7

Key: MM=Maintenance management; AM = Asset management; CREM = Corporate real estate management and FM = Facilities management

The most important work focus as indicated by all practitioners together is "The maintenance of facilities, equipment, fixtures and other assets" This work focus was also ranked most important (1st position) by the non-FM practitioners and second by the FM practitioners. According to literature this item is expectedly the most important work focus of the maintenance manager and suggests that generally, Nigerian building support practitioners regard the main work focus of the Maintenance manager most important. Again for all practitioners, the next most important work focus is "Providing comfort for owner organizations at least possible cost" ranked 2nd. This item which is the most important focus for the CREM practitioner was ranked in exact same position (2nd) by the non-FM practitioners and ranked similarly in 1st position by the FM group.

The 3rd most important work focus for all practitioners is "Providing adequate work space and support services to enhance organizational performance" ranked 3rd. These item was equally ranked 3rd by the FM and non-FM groups. This variable is the most

important focus for the FM practice (Amaratunga *et al*, 2000; Fielder, 2004; and Wiggins, 2010), implying that the maintenance manager's work focus is the most important focus of work to the Nigerian BSS practitioners, while the FM work focus are deemed to be relatively of less importance among the practitioners.

The least rated items by all practitioners are "Obtaining optimum capital return and profit from property as investment and core product", "Management of leases and legal acquisition" and "Achieving stated objectives of the owners in terms of optimum income return, preservation of value and others such as social or political needs" (PM) ranked 5th, 6th and 7th respectively. These three items are important work focus of the asset management (5th) and the property management (6th and 7th) practices (Balch, 1994; Leväinen, 1997 and Tuomela and Puhto, 2001), suggesting that the major work focus of these two groups of practitioners are not that important in the perception of the Nigerian building support service providers.

In the comparative analysis of the FM and non-FM groups it is observed that most of the rankings for the values are similar for both groups of practitioners, except in the case of the variable "Obtaining optimum capital return and profit from property as investment and core product" which were ranked 7th and 2nd by the FM and non-FM groups respectively. It is important to note that the FM group rated the most important work focus for FM i.e. "Provision of adequate work space and support services to enhance organizational performance" 3rd. It is also indicated that the facilities managers rated the most important work focus for the CREM and maintenance management practices 1st and 2nd over and above the most important focus for their practice.. This suggests that the Nigerian Facilities managers may not be fully aware of those strategic features that could distinguish them from the other traditional BSS practices and invariably may not be providing them. This could be due to the relative infancy of the Nigerian FM practice and the inadequate knowledge base of the practice.

Comparison of the Important Work Object of Facilities Managers and Other BSS Providers

The most important object of Asset Management and then CREM practices were again rated 1st and 2nd in the aggregated rating by all respondents as well as in the FM and non-FM groups separately (Table 3).

Table 3: *Most Important Work Object of Lagos Building Support Service Providers*

Work Focus	All Service provider		Facility Managers		Non-Facility Managers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Property as organization's business capital and asset (AM)	4.63	1	4.69	1	4.61	1
Cost of Facilities and service equipment (CREM)	4.48	2	4.63	2	4.44	2
Work space, building service and support for occupant's needs (FM)	4.35	3	4.50	4	4.30	4
Property owner's income return, gains or need (PM)	4.26	4	3.80	6	4.40	3
Technicians and service persons (MM)	4.20	5	4.56	3	4.08	5
Furniture and internal fittings (MM)	4.05	6	4.44	5	3.92	6

Key: MM=Maintenance management; AM = Asset management; CREM = Corporate real estate management and FM = Facilities management

The most important object of work for the facilities managers which is "work Space, building service and support for occupant's needs" was rated 3rd overall by all practitioners and in an ironical 4th position by the facilities managers. This suggests that in the Nigerian practice BSS providers generally, do not regard identified FM roles as most important and neither do the FM practitioners for that matter. Generally, the rankings of the importance of the featured object of work by the FM and non- FM practitioners are quite similar except again for the variable "Property owner's income return, gains or need" rated 6th and 3rd respectively.

Facilities managers are expected to offer a distinctively different and strategic service from other BSS provider, hence their focus and object of work should be relevant to FM and distinctively different from that of others. Hence, there was a need to determine if there is a significant difference between the ratings of the various work focus and object of work of the facilities managers in comparison with the non-facilities managers. To achieve this, two hypotheses were postulated as follows:

H2: "There is no significant difference between the rating of the importance of the work focus of BSS providers by the facilities and non-facilities managers"

H3: "There is no significant difference between the rating of the importance of the object of work of BSS providers by the facilities and non-facilities managers"

Table 4: *Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test for Ranking of the Most Important Work Focus and Main Object*

	Main Focus	Main Object
Z	-0.507	-0.943
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.612	0.345

The values obtained were subjected to inferential statistics (Wilcoxon signed rank test) at 99% confidence level (Table 4). The results shows that the ratings between the two groups of practitioners are not significantly different ($P = 0.612 > 0.01$ and $P = 0.345 > 0.01$). The two hypotheses were therefore accepted. The implications of this is that there is absence of a distinctive difference in the ranking of the most important work focus and object between the facilities managers and non-facilities managers. This implies that presumably, the distinctive FM roles that add value to clients' businesses is not being provided majorly by the practices in the study and that the similarities in the practices are too significant to expect a more strategic content from the practices of the facilities managers in the study.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Although majority of the BSS practitioners in the study are senior officers, the relatively limited number in the managerial level implies that they may not have much influence at decision making at the board level which will make their contributions to the organization less impacting. This is consistent with Simpson and Barrett's (1996) conclusion that when a facilities manager holds a directorship role, FM is usually more strategic; alternatively, if he is low in the organizational hierarchy, his role is usually less proactive.

The indication that majority of the respondents that are addressed as facilities managers mostly adopt other traditional building support principles order than FM, and that property management principles is most prevalent among them, suggests that BSS providers are still confused as to the distinction between FM and these other practices. With this scenario among practitioners, the level of confusion among the clients can only be imagined. The finding also reinforces the presumption that in Nigeria there might not be a distinctive difference in the value added by practitioners who claim to provide FM and that most of them merely use FM title as a "catch phrase" to enhance patronage of their businesses. This is again consistent with the findings of Tuomela and Puhto (2001) about the FM practice in Northern Europe. Also, the findings that property management is the most prevalent principle among BSS providers seem to corroborate the indications by previous authors (Ojo, 2002 and Odiete, 1998) that the Nigerian FM like most of other nations' FM, although multidisciplinary in nature, evolved largely from property management. It also presupposes that there is still a strong presence of the more traditional practices (particularly property management) among BSS providers because the FM practice is still evolving.

The most important object and work focus of building service practices vary with the principle that the practitioner adopts in practice (Stansall, 1994; Leväinen, 1997; Amaratunga, Baldry & Sarsha, 2000; Tuomela & Puhto, 2001; & Williams, 2003). According to literature, FM features such as main focus, role etc. are strategically distinct from that of other traditional BSS practices. The facilities manager must be able to recognize and adopt the distinctive features of the FM practice in order to be able to add value to the client organization. The finding from this study

suggests that contrary to expectations, the FM practitioners in the study area do not hold the work focus and object of the FM practice as most important and may not be adopting fully those value adding strategic features that could distinguish them from the traditional BSS practices. This is consistent with the notion by writers such as Kaya *et al.*, (2004), Noor and Pitt (2009) and Adejumo, *et al.* (2009). The finding also indicates that there are no clear distinctions between FM and non-FM practices in Lagos. This is similar to findings in studies undertaken in other contexts at the turn of the millennium such as Asia (Gilleard & Yiqun, 1999); Sweden (Tuomela & Phuto, 2001); Germany (Kanning *et al.*, 2008); and Denmark (Jensen, 2010). This finding is however contrary to what obtains in developed countries such as the Netherlands, Australia and, to a reasonable extent, the UK where FM adds significant value to businesses of clients (Alexander, 2003; & Drion *et al*, 2010). This supports the assertion by Price and Aklaghi (1999) that while FM appears to be in its third generation stage (creating spaces which enable different levels and forms of performance) in most of the developed world where it emanated from, it is still at the first stage (building and maintenance management stage) within some other markets such as Nigeria's.

An important indication in the comparative ratings for the important work focus and object of work between the FM and non-FM practitioners is that two of the variables were ranked quite differently. These are "Obtaining optimum capital return and profit from property as investment and core product" (ranked 7th and 2nd respectively for work focus) and "Property owner's income return or gain and needs" (ranked 6th and 3rd respectively for object of work). Both of these two variables are important focus and object of work of the property manager. The differential in the comparative rankings implies that the investors' rental income from the property might not be a priority for FM practitioners in the study area. This is probably because global controversies on the distinction between facilities and property management have forced the FM practitioners to recognize that the basic distinction between them is that property managers focus on meeting property owners' return and other needs, while they focus on user's or occupant's organisational needs.

Furthermore, the high rankings of these two variables which are important work focus and object of property management practice by all other respondents corroborate the findings in objective 1 that property management practice is most prevalent among office BSS providers in Lagos metropolis.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study examined the nature and strategic features of FM as applied to office buildings in Lagos metropolis. Due to the relative infancy of the FM practice, many Nigerian BSS practitioners continue to use FM largely as a "catch phrase" to enhance patronage without any appreciation or application of its principles. Furthermore, this research indicates that the Nigerian FM practice is not too distinct from other traditional BSS practices. For example, the

two groups of respondents adopt property management principles more predominantly compared to others while, the comparative rankings of the seven (7) work focus that were featured in this study are quite similar between the FM and non-FM group of practitioners. Also, the FM group of practitioners rated the most important work focus of the maintenance manager most highly just as other practitioners are rated the most important work focus of the FM practice 3rd. Furthermore, contrary to expectation "Space, building service and support for occupant's needs" which according to literature is the most important object for FM practice was rated 4th by the FM group of practitioners. This unclear distinction between the two groups of respondents is similar to the findings by Gilleard and Yiqun (1999) in China, Tuomela and Puhto (2001) in Sweden and Noor et.al (2010) in Malaysia.

It is apparent that Nigerian BSS providers must aspire towards acquiring a better understanding of the FM principles and its distinctive strategic features. This could be achieved through training and re-training opportunities. It is recognised that those who exclude FM from corporate strategy and treat as a "commodity overhead" will be at a significant disadvantage. Organizations should approach FM as an integral part of their strategic plan to achieve required success (BIFM, 2006). The IFMA Nigeria group and NIESV have major roles to play in this respect. It is recommended that IFMA must in addition to the award of professional qualifications strive toward improving the knowledge content of the practice. However, these institutions must realize that they cannot give what they do not have. They should therefore collaborate with relevant institutions and Universities to sponsor trainees to nations where FM practice has attained a more strategic status so that they can acquire new knowledge which can be used in fine-tuning the FM training to incorporate contextual issues.

There is an ongoing agitation by the Nigerian branch of IFMA for FM to become recognized as a profession by the legislative house. The issue of professionalism cannot be achieved unless the practice attains a more proactive, strategic status with which comes professionalism. Without professionalism the non-practitioners cannot be kept away from the market and invariably the image of the practice and patronage cannot be enhanced. This brings into focus the import of demonstrable and contextual performance measures and measurement tools that will assist practitioners to identify the real need of users and the value they add to the client's business. The development of such tools and measures could be an area of further research.

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